Seen

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/26771809.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter
Additional Tags:	Season/Series 03, Missing Scene, Trans Male Character, Incarcerated Hannibal, Cruel Hannibal, Hannibal likes to taunt Alana, vulgarity, crude Hannibal, no more person suit, the house on the bluff, Revelations, discussions about children, mentions of hysterectomy, Hannibal Lecter Loves Will Graham, Does Will love Hannibal?, Trans Hannibal Lecter, Episode: s03e09 And the Woman Clothed with the Sun…, and, Post-Episode: s03e13 The Wrath of the Lamb
Language:	English
Series:	Part 34 of Tiger's canon(ish) Hannigram fics, Part 37 of Non Cis Fics
Stats:	Published: 2020-10-02 Words: 3,182 Chapters: 1/1

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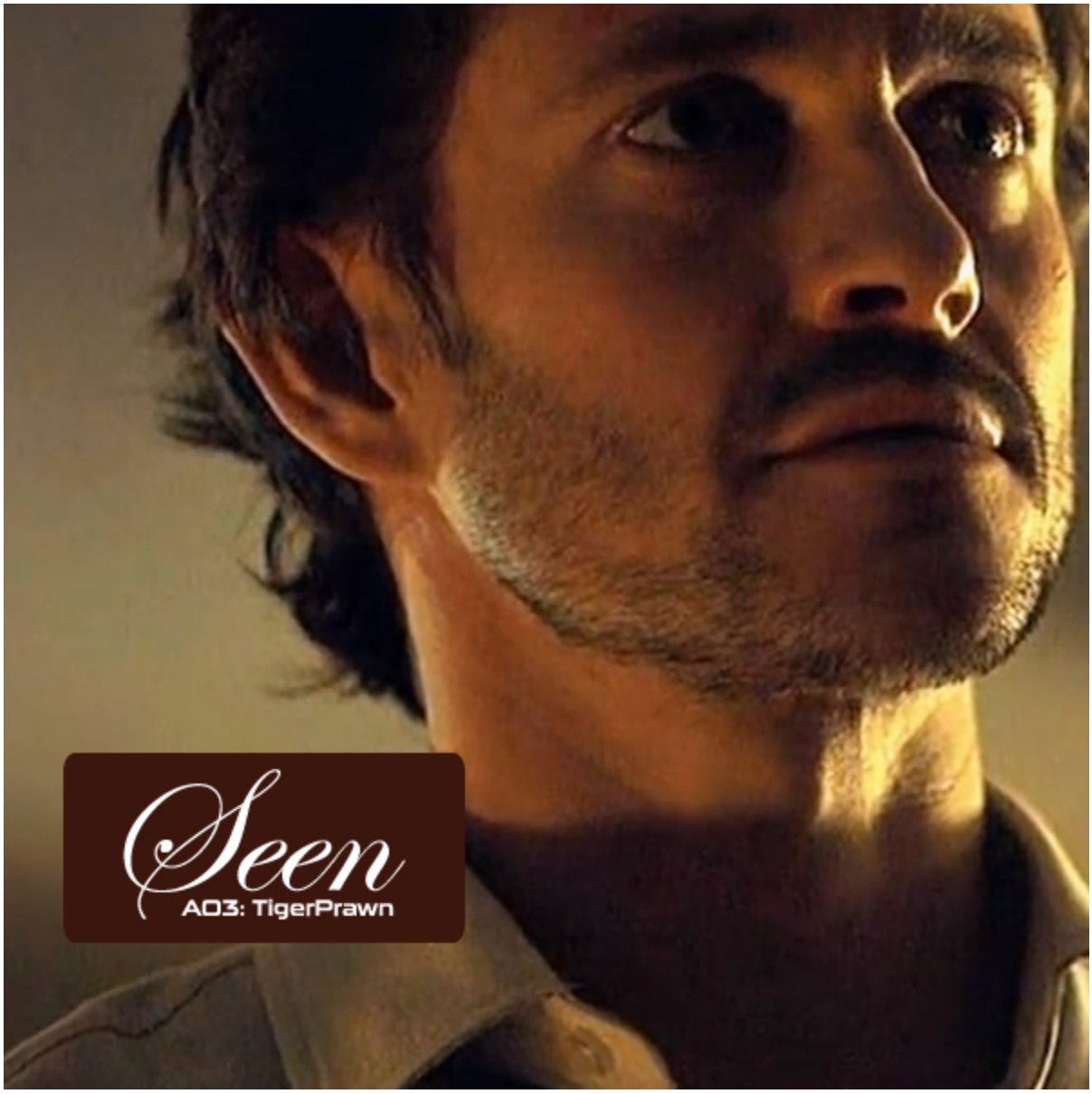
by TigerPrawn

Summary

Hannibal has never let anyone see every single aspect of who he is. He wants Will Graham to see him.



“Good morning Alana.” Hannibal smiled pleasantly. Doctor Bloom was making her rounds and he always took the limited opportunity it gave him to prod at someone. Being captive, he didn’t want anyone to think he’d lost who he was. In fact, having no longer a need for his person suit, he was able to indulge himself a great deal more.

Whilst he still didn’t allow anyone to truly see his real self, he had done away with social niceties. Not for the sake of being crass, but purely for the small amusement it would bring him in this place. It was one of the reasons he greatly enjoyed the occasional personal visit from Alana, she had so many buttons that he did enjoy to push.

“Hannibal,” Alana greeted him in response, no professional greetings now. Not that there had been any between them for a while, but something in her tone from her very first day as his keeper, made clear that the reasons had changed. He was no longer Doctor Lecter to her, not because of their personal relationship, but because he had been stripped of the title, in her eyes.

He stood silently watching her as she picked up the file kept by the door. His naughty or nice assessment.

“If I’m a good boy, will I get a reward?” Hannibal taunted, completely ignored by Alana, as expected. It took a lot to get a rise from her, and fortunately for his own amusement, he was adept at this.

He took a seat behind his desk, continuing to assess her and not missing the glint of the ring on her left hand as she leafed through his file.

“I see congratulations are in order.” Hannibal mused, enjoying the slight twitch in Alana’s expression. He knew she was mentally cursing herself for giving him some little insight into her life.

Even so, she was cool and calm as she replied, “Thank you. I’m sure you understand why you weren’t invited to the wedding.”

Oh, how he did enjoy it when she bit back.

“Hmm,” He let out an amused hum, not just at her words but at the opening she had unintentionally given him. “Yes, I suppose having an ex lover there would be a little awkward.”

Alana looked up, her expression full of disdain. “Especially when the ex is a cannibalistic serial killer. Believe me Hannibal, you aren’t a notch in the bedpost that I boast about.”

Hannibal chuckled dismissively at her words, her intended barb did nothing but amuse him.

“Yes, it would rather detract from the happy couple I suppose.” He mused for a moment and she went back to the notes before he continued. “I do sincerely offer my congratulations though. I am sure you’ll be very happy together, especially if you are still as skilled with your tongue as I knew you to be.”

Alana’s jaw tightened as she tried to ignore him. Tried and failed, he had found a chink in today’s armour and wasn’t about to turn down the opportunity for a little fun.

“I wasn’t entirely surprised to discover that you are interested in women,” He pushed, “you always were rather enthusiastic about my own anatomy.” Hannibal kept his tone pleasant, but there was a goad beneath it.

“Don’t be crude, Hannibal. Don’t do that.” She looked up and fixed him with a glare. Furious anger there, exactly as Hannibal had wanted. He had so missed getting under people’s skin and Alana’s was an especially gratifying skin to get under.

“Merely an observation.” Hannibal taunted.

Alana closed the notes, her glare unwavering. “I know what you’re trying to do. And you know that I never saw you as anything other than a man.” Her tone deepened, “Until I saw you as a monster.”

Hannibal hummed, another jeer, a disbelieving note in it to taunt her further.

Though he knew she was entirely correct. She never had made him feel anything less than the man he was. Her sexual orientation had no impact on how they had been together but he knew the inference would get to her. And it had.

“You’ve got a visitor, Hannibal.” Alana said. “I expect you to be on your best behaviour.”

With that Alana turned and walked out, leaving Hannibal to mull over who the visitor would be, not wanting to get his hopes up that this time it might be someone a little more entertaining than Frederick. It might finally be the one person he really did want to reveal every aspect of himself to.

He didn’t allow himself to think of the name of the visitor he most desired. Finding himself strangely superstitious when it came to the one person he anticipated over all others. He would come, eventually. Hannibal knew, it was entirely the reason why he had surrendered to Jack. Because one day he would come.

Hannibal stood and strolled. Not paced, no he wouldn’t pace around his cell like a caged animal. He looked up at the skylight and the world beyond.

The scent of a ship on a bottle drifted across the room. A scent he loved and detested in equal measure, and for conflicting reasons.

“Hello Doctor Lecter.”

The beast under his skin raged and preened. Finally Will had come to him.

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Hannibal watched as Will turned away from the bluff and they went into the house.

They had come to this point by design, and there was no denying that the design had been Will’s. Hannibal thought that most likely the deals he had struck to ensure Hannibal was the bait in this trap - the worm on his hook - would have his life in the balance.

Will Graham would have convinced Jack with a simple outcome - if the Dragon didn’t do it, then Will planned to. Will Graham would see him dead by the end of this day.

Or that’s what he would have said. He might have even believed it to some extent too. But now his thoughts practically vibrated from him and Hannibal could see Will coming to his own truth.

One that he had barely even acknowledged to himself. It was clear that Will wasn’t entirely sure he was there to kill Hannibal at all.

Perhaps it was friendship, perhaps love. Or perhaps Will just wanted to see, finally, beyond the veil. Perhaps Will wanted to know every truth of him, just as Hannibal wished of Will. He wanted Will to finally become, to evolve to his true potential. And he wanted Will to see him entirely.

In that moment there was nothing more beautiful than the man standing looking over the bluff. Here they would make some sort of final stand, here their fate would be decided one way or another. Whatever it was to be, he knew it would be a dignified end.

Honourable, in his own way.

Alana, amongst others, would rob him of his dignity.

Though, he knew that wasn't exactly fair. There was a very simple way she could have removed all his dignity and yet never did.

As much as he taunted her over his secret that she held over him, it would harm her own dignity to sink so low as to reveal it. She could have been cruel and moved Hannibal to the women's wing. But Hannibal was no fool, he had never revealed that part of himself to anyone who would hold it over him or against him. Alana had been perfect to use, because there was no way a woman of such righteous conviction, would ever out him. No matter what.

And that was how he knew Will didn't know. Couldn't know.

Will looked about the house, though didn't appear to be taking any of it in. Perhaps he saw himself as a victim? As he had seen Miriam and Abigail. Perhaps he counted himself as another victim in this secret place. When in fact he was, something Hannibal did not take lightly to bestow, an equal.

"Here," Hannibal led into the guest room and Will followed silently. So trusting in his way, in the way that he trusted against his own intention to not do so. Will stood quietly as Hannibal pulled clothes from the closet, the shirt was one of many with W.G. embroidered below the collar.

Will nodded as Hannibal handed him the clothes, still saying nothing. Not even looking at Hannibal. He likely wouldn't notice the name in the shirt, which was for the best. He hadn't expected Will to wear them in such circumstances as this. He had planned an altogether different visit to this place with Will.

Will disappeared to the adjoining bathroom and Hannibal heard the shower turn on, he left Will to it.

He took a slow walk to his own room. Nothing so grand as his home in Baltimore. A modest home in comparison, and small enough that he could hear the water stop a few minutes later.

With a sigh Hannibal stripped from the prison jumpsuit, knowing Dolarhyde would not be far behind them and come what might when he arrived.

He was lost in this thought when his door opened, Will standing there in a towel, dripping wet. His eyes burning like an ocean turned hot, boiling.

Hannibal stood in nothing but the prison issue boxers, so close to revelation.

Will swallowed audibly, his eyes fixed on Hannibal's and not leaving. There was something behind his eyes, his mind working something over and over. An evaluation perhaps. Perhaps Will trying to decide whether he would kill Hannibal or… something else.

"I need to know, Hannibal." Will finally growled out the words.

"What, Will?" Hannibal asked simply, cool but taunting. He needed Will to be explicit if he was going to be. There could be so many questions that were coming next, but Hannibal desperately wanted to be correct in thinking that it would be the one he needed to hear.

"I… I feel like I see you. More than anyone else. I feel like I'm in your head, you're in mine. More than the empathy, beyond that."

"That the blood of my kills is on your hands." Hannibal pushed Will with the acknowledgement. There was no use being shy of all this now. Not with time ticking down.

Will's jaw tightened but he still didn't look away.

So long had Hannibal wished to be the sole recipient of such an intense penetration, as though Will were seeing right through him, that he had not fully anticipated it. He had not expected to feel so undone, so seen. So very nearly, completely seen.

"There's something that is missing. Something you're not telling me. Something… worse." Will probed, determination and fear in his expression.

"Worse?" Hannibal queried. "Worse than the crimes you already know I've committed? Could there be anything worse?"

"You tell me," Will replied, stiffly. "What is it you're hiding? I thought that once I could see you, beyond the fabrication of you, then there would be a whole truth. I would see you, horns and all."

Hannibal couldn't help a twitch of a smile at that. "Horns and all, like the devil I am."

Silence fell between them, Will's eyes still boring into him.

"It's not worse." Hannibal finally said, "Though I suppose that depends on your own personal beliefs and misconceptions."

Will's brow furrowed and he swallowed again, Hannibal wondered how dry Will's mouth was.

"You don't see all of me, physically. Some have seen the part of me you haven't, but never the whole of me. You see the whole of me, Will. What remains hidden doesn't change who I am."

"Then why hide it from me?"

The words knocked the air from Hannibal's lungs, an unexpected and visceral reaction to a truth he hadn't acknowledged. There were many times during his friendship with Will that he

might have told him, many times he might have wanted to and never did.

Hannibal inhaled slowly.

All trace of the ship on the bottle gone, only the fresh smell of the products he had chosen for the guest room.

“I didn’t want it to change the way you see me.” Hannibal finally admitted.

Will’s frown deepened, “You said yourself that what it is doesn’t change who you are.”

“It doesn’t, but I believe it will be much like how your perception of me changed when you realised I love you.” Hannibal stated the fact.

Will finally looked away, his skin flushing from chest to ears.

Of course, Will had realised. Or let himself realise. And that was the reason they were here now. Will had orchestrated all of this as he tried to decide whether to kill Hannibal or love him back.

“It’s ridiculous. What I… What I think I might feel. Towards someone who has given me scars outside and in.” Will admitted, quietly, not raising his eyes.

Hannibal took a slow step forward, and then another when Will didn’t run.

“We all bear our scars, Will. For one reason or another.” He came to a stop so close to Will that he could feel the air around him vibrate. He took one of Will’s hands, allowing for the hesitation there, though it wasn’t quite a flinch.

He raised Will’s hand to his chest, running the back of his hand across the bottom of his pectoral, the fine line nestled amongst the hair there. Will’s eyes were drawn to the motion, and then down, as Hannibal trailed it further, another scar just above where his boxers sat low on his hips.

Will closed his eyes, taking it in.

Hannibal didn’t need to see the realisation there to know Will understood.

He didn’t pull his hand away, stood there allowing Hannibal to move it back up and then to his lips. Will didn’t draw away as Hannibal pressed a kiss to his knuckles.

Will let out a heavy sigh, “After, after *all* the things you’ve done, that we’ve done to each other. You thought that I would hate you for this?”

“Not hate, repulsion,” Hannibal corrected.

Will shook his head and drew his hand back.

“I was close to telling you. In the BSHCI, when we spoke of family.” Hannibal admitted and Will shook his head again, looking down at his feet. A light speckling of water fell from

Will's hair to the ground.

"To be spiteful." Will concluded and didn't look up to see Hannibal nod.

"You wished for a family. You had one." Hannibal knew there was no hiding the truth of it all now, not from Will. He didn't want to. Will was either going to kill him or not, regardless of his feelings. Best he do so with all the facts to hand. "A stepchild absolved you of any biological blame. I on the other hand have never felt such a concern. I considered many times having a child of my own. Memories of my sister and the joy she brought into my life made the finality of my hysterectomy difficult."

"You didn't want a child Hannibal, you wanted a protégé. Randall Tier, Bedelia, Abigail. A child would have just been something to mould in your image." Will's words were meant to cut, and Hannibal felt that was justified, and not wholly untrue.

"And now you see all of me." Hannibal replied, referring more to the depths of his own cruelty and that which he brought out in Will, than just his physical being.

"Yes, I do." Will replied.

He turned and left the room.

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He noticed how Will paused when he turned from his reflection and the moon beyond, to watch Hannibal place down the bottle of wine. His eyes falling on the bottle and holding there for a moment whilst Hannibal polished the glasses.

The wine Will had brought to him so many years ago now, the one that Hannibal had brought to this house not long after that, in the hopes that he and Will would drink it together one day. Though at the time he hadn't quite anticipated these particular circumstances.

Will didn't mention the wine, but his eyes couldn't hide the fact that he was processing that information, that he was being further confronted with the depth and longevity of Hannibal's affections.

"Do you intend to watch him kill me?" Hannibal asked, resigned to any fate now. He had never feared death, never really feared much of anything. Though he was sure that the swell of feeling in his stomach at the thought of Will rejecting him might indeed be fear.

"I intend to watch him change you."

The choice of words might have been amusingly cruel, though he wasn't sure Will had considered them too fully.

"My compassion for you is inconvenient, Will." Hannibal rejoined, opening the wine.

"If you're partial to beef products, it's inconvenient to be compassionate toward a cow."

Hannibal let out a soft chuckle, but the words resonated. He needed more from Will, needed to push him into his intent one way or another.

“Save yourself, kill them all?”

“I don't know if I can save myself. And maybe that's just fine.” Will replied, and that intensity in his eyes was so much that after a moment Hannibal had to look away. There was something else there that was difficult for Hannibal to allow, an affection in Will’s eyes that he had long hoped for but assumed he would never obtain. An admission along with his words that, whatever came next, Will was going to stop fighting his nature.

“‘No greater love hath man than to lay down his life for a friend.’”

“He's watching us now.”

“I know.”

The shot went clean through, bursting the bottle he held. The bottle that held so much more within than just wine.

And whilst Hannibal went down, the pain searing through him, he knew it wouldn’t be fatal. A clean shot and no vital organs in the way. He knew that he had the strength to stand and retaliate, even as the knife sunk into Will’s flesh, even as he flew through the glass and out into the night.

He’d had worse pain. He could manage this, but he waited. Waiting and wanting, willing the monster inside Will Graham to stop hiding in the shadows and emerge fully from its chrysalis.

And then Will plunged the knife into the Dragon and his eyes flared as they had done earlier that evening. But they didn’t dim this time, the fire didn’t subside.

There he was, that beautiful monster.

Hannibal pulled himself to his feet and stalked towards them both, ready to join Will for the kill.

The look in Will’s eyes, the unleashed monster within. Powerful, victorious.

When the Dragon lay dead between them, Hannibal welcomed Will into his arms. And there in that embrace, as Will declared it beautiful, he could see in the man’s eyes. His love was returned, acceptance there of all Hannibal was and all they could be together.

He rested his cheek against Will as they sank against each other. An absolute acceptance of whatever would come next.

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